

REMARKS

The subject application is a Rule 1.53(b) of U.S. Serial No. 09/459,769, filed December 13, 1999. U.S. Serial No. 09/459,769 is pending today and this application is copending therewith for the purposes of 35 U.S.C. §120.

By this Preliminary Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 2, 4, 7 and 17 (to correct obvious typographical errors and/or to clarify the claimed invention, without narrowing the scope of the claimed invention), and added new independent claim 24. Accordingly, claims 1-24 are now pending in the subject application and presented for examination.

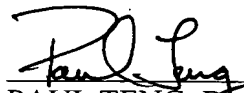
Applicant maintains that this Preliminary Amendment does not introduce new matter. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this Preliminary Amendment.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



PAUL TENG, Reg. No. 40,837
Attorney for Applicant
Cooper & Dunham LLP
Tel.: (212) 278-0400